

A TRIBUTE TO LANCE
ARMSTRONG

MR. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, in the world of sports, there are competitions, there are grueling tests of strength and endurance, and there is the Tour de France. For twenty-two days—through 20 different stages—over 2,286 miles—over mountains—across valleys—through cities—some of the world's greatest athletes ride. They compete against each other, the elements, the terrain and themselves primarily with the hope of simply completing the ride.

Competing in the Tour de France, there are the great athletes, there are the elite athletes, and there is Lance Armstrong. On his *Circum Vitae*, Lance might list himself as a two time Olympian, a two time US Champion, a World Champion, or—a feat boasted by only eight riders since the beginning of the tour in 1903—a three time Tour de France winner.

On this passed Sunday, July 29, the 29 year old Texan pulled up to the Champs-Elysees, six minutes and 44 seconds ahead of his next closest competitor. It was his third victory at the Tour de France in as many years. While he has been reluctant to accept the title, many of his fellow cyclists consider him to be “the Patron”—the unquestioned boss of the race.

However, as remarkable as his competitive achievements may be, Mr. Armstrong's *Circum Vitae* has one addition that establishes him as a truly remarkable human being — he is a cancer survivor. With the same fortitude that carried him over 6 peaks in the Pyrenees, Mr. Armstrong defeated choriocarcinoma, an aggressive form of testicular cancer. By the time it was discovered, the cancer had spread to, and established itself in,

Mr. Armstrong's abdomen, lungs and brain. Some of the eleven masses in the talented young cyclist lungs were the size of golf balls. According to medical science, Mr. Armstrong had an estimated 50/50 chance of survival. Needless to say, the odds of his every returning to the sport he love were more slim.

However, as has been made obvious in the last three tours, Lance Armstrong is a man of great determination. Since 1997, Mr. Armstrong has been cancer free. Despite having endured brain surgery, the removal of a testicle and intense chemotherapy, he has returned to and excelled in one of the toughest competitions in the history of sport.

Beyond his professional triumphs, Mr. Armstrong has lived a fulfilled personal life. In 1998, Lance Armstrong and Kristen Richard were joined as husband and wife. In 1999, the couple were blessed with the birth of their first son Luke David.

Beyond his incredible profession and personal triumphs, Mr. Armstrong has become a beacon of hope to his community. Through his work with the Lance Armstrong Foundation, Mr. Armstrong has greatly benefitted the causes of research, early detection and treatment, and survivorship. The name Lance Armstrong has come to signify hope for cancer patients and their families.

So, Mr. President, I rise today not to congratulate Mr. Armstrong... but to thank him. He has meant a great deal to a great many people. The word “hero” is, in my opinion, overused in the world of sports. Lance Armstrong, Mr. President, is a hero.

I yield the floor.